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MDIV STUDENT HANNAH OSTLUND IS OFFERING GRACE

While every PTS student’s experience is different, some activities just seem normal: studying in the nooks and crannies of the **Barbour Library**, making friends at the tables of the Kadel Dining Hall, or attending worship in the spacious **Hicks Memorial Chapel**. But those who enrolled in the fall of 2020, like M.Div. student Hannah Ostlund, are still waiting to find *normal*.

Hannah describes her first year in seminary as “challenging but formative”—marked by the pandemic, but also generating important self-learning. “My first semester, I really burned out,” she explains. “But second semester, what changed things for me was the assignment in spiritual formation class to create a rule of life. I learned what it looks like to give grace to myself in practical ways, like incorporating time to exercise or to read for fun.”

Now continuing to give herself grace daily, Hannah is excited for the world to fully reopen, including the Seminary’s physical environments for study, worship, and community. In fact, she is so thoroughly convinced of the importance of student connections, whether meeting in person or over video calls, that she decided to run for office in the PTS Student Association. She is now serving as the Association’s secretary and says, “I want to help revamp student relationships and bring life back to campus!”

Hannah knew during her undergraduate study (and her work at the **Montreat Conference Center**) that she wanted to attend seminary.

What drew her specifically to PTS was the **World Mission Initiative**. For a college project, she had created a short-term mission guidebook that acknowledged the ways these trips have often been harmful and that sought to gain a deeper contextual understanding to create healthier missional engagement. When she discovered WMI, she felt an instant connection.

She also sensed a strong, vibrant community among the students—another reason she is excited to discover a new normal on campus.

Now that she is a year into seminary, she is also feeling a pull to youth ministry. For this reason, she is thrilled to begin her field education, which will place her with a congregation in a role focused on youth ministry. This experience will serve as an important discernment tool for Hannah, who is considering two different paths forward: serving as a youth pastor in a church setting or pursuing a Ph.D. in missiology.

Whichever road she chooses, we are confident Hannah will bring ample grace, both for herself and for all those God brings into her journey.



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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